THE USE OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS OF STUDENTS AT ENGLISH LESSONS

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This article is devoted to the issue of the use of communicative activities for the development of speaking skills of students in the university. It was established, that the intensification of the educational process requires the search and use of new forms, methods and technologies of teaching and learning, means of supporting students' interest in the material and activation of their cognitive activity. Thus, one of the urgent problems of modern methods of teaching foreign languages is the organization of the teaching process for students of different age groups with the help of a communicative approach. The article mentions various types and subtypes of conditionally communicative and fully communicative activities, which are most commonly used to teach students speaking foreign language. The article also defines the features and the means of using certain types of speech activities, in particular, reproductive exercises, which include:
1) retelling,
2) abbreviated and selective retelling,
3) retelling-translation,
4) dramatization,
5) creative retelling.
As for responsive activities, they include:
1) question-and-answer exercises,
2) replica exercises,
3) free conversation.
Among the productive activities, we highlight the following: situational activities that combine
1) solving problem situations,
2) imaginary situations,
3) role-playing.
Descriptive activities include various types of descriptions. The article also talks about the advantages of discussion activities, mainly 1) educational discussion, 2) commenting, 3) situational discussions, as well as compositional activities and press conferences. The article states that during the performance of communicative activities, the work should be aimed at involving students into communicatively oriented activities regarding the observation of the phenomena being studied, at revealing the connections and relationships between the means of expressing information, at finding language units for expressing one's own opinion, etc. It was established, that it is also necessary to develop communicative exercises and activities based on real-life material or a model text, which are relevant for students of a certain age, which are interesting, close and understandable for students, which have educational and socio-cultural potential
Keywords: *reproductive activities, responsive activities, debatable activities, conditionally communicative exercises, communicative activities, method of visualization*

1. Introduction

A foreign language as a subject occupies an important place in the system of public education in Ukraine. In modern society, which is characterized by the active development of interstate relations in the fields of culture, science, technology, production, mastering a foreign language becomes a mandatory sign of an educated person, because it opens the access to the cultural and scientific values of other nations, promotes the establishment of business and cultural relationships with other countries, facilitates relations between peoples, etc. Learning a foreign language is of particular importance now for Ukraine's international ties are getting stronger. One of the urgent problems of the modern method of teaching foreign languages is the organization of teaching speaking with the help of

speech (communicative) activities in the higher educational establishment.

Speaking activity is considered as one of the many types of human activity and is defined as an active, purposeful, language-mediated and situationally conditioned process of receiving and issuing a speech message in the interaction of people with each other [1].

2. Literary review

Communicative activities as an effective type of practical methods of educational and cognitive activity have become the object of research by many scientists. Most of the investigators stress that communicative activities include any activities that encourage and require a learner to speak with and listen to other learners, as well as with people in the program and community [2, 3]. It was stated, that communicative activities have real purposes: to find information, break down barriers, talk about self, and learn about the culture [4, 5].

The results of investigations showed that even when a lesson is focused on developing reading or writing skills, communicative activities should be integrated into the lesson [6]. Furthermore, research on second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that more learning takes place when students are engaged in relevant tasks within a dynamic learning environment rather than in traditional teacher-led classes [7, 8]. A great number of scientists give the tips, techniques, exercises, games, and other activities that lead to effective communication, help guide students' interactions with others, and improve their communication skills [9].

Two major types of activities are stated in the article on the basis of investigations, mainly communicative (for the formation of communicative skills and work on creating and analyzing a text) and non-communicative (forms, orthographic skills, lexical, grammatical and speaking skills) [3].

It was advised to use effective types of communicative activities in his work on the development of coherent speech, that was stated on the ground of observation and analysis of language units and texts [6].

Emphasizing the study of the foreign language on a communicative and functional stylistic basis, Pentylyuk M. singles out educational and speaking activities, aimed at forming knowledge about the communicative features of language units, and fully communicative activities, aimed at construction, analysis and editing one's own opinion in the free conversation on the basis of communication situations [8].

Mykhaylovska G. and Mamchur L. both proposed the application of their classification of communicative activities for the formation of communicative speaking skills, in particular the following: complex (learning a language unit, its meaning, forms, functions, methods of use in speech); pre-speaking (imitation, constructive and transformational tasks that help to master pre-speeaking skills: orthographic, lexical, grammatical skills, spelling); speaking (tasks built on the basis of the text, educational speaking situations, situational-thematic group of words, aimed at independent modeling of the speaking situation) [4].

Though, there are some issues that have not been properly studied yet. Most of them are associated with systematized overviews about advantages and features of communicative activities that can be used at the foreign language lessons.

3. The aim and objectives of the study

The purpose of the article was to investigate the varieties, advantages and features of communicative activities that can be used at foreign language lessons to develop the speaking skills of students in the university.

To accomplish the aim, the following tasks have been set:

1. to state the difference of communicative and non-communicative activities;

2. to determine the classification of communicative activities at English lessons;

3. to find out the peculiarities of each type of the activities:

4. to state the correspondence of communicative activities and a contextual real-life material.

4. Materials and methods

The main theoretical and methodological basis of this article is based on the works of Ukrainian and foreign scientists who researched the use of communicative activities for the development of students' speaking skills at English classes. During the scientific research of this topic, we used such methods of investigation as the analysis and synthesis of the conceptual and terminological system and the results of previously conducted research, due to which it was established, that communicative exercises should be widely put into practice, because they influence better results in mastering a foreign language, in particular, on the development of reproductive and productive speaking activity of students, since these exercises bring the teaching and learning process closer to the needs of life, allow the teacher to activate the educational process, and the students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills through practical activities.

The methods of comparison and systematization of research results were also used, due to which we were able to highlight the advantages of the communicative approach over the so-called traditional approach.

5. Result and discussion

We consider communicative activities to be a leading method of formation of the students' communicative competence, which, according to Horoshkina O., Nikitina A., Pentylyuk M., presupposes the involvement of students in active communicative activities, aimed at the formation of intellectual and creative abilities of students: creative thinking, active speaking, good imagination, high attention, observation, etc. [8]. Their necessary component is a specific speaking situation, which depends on the choice of verbal and non-verbal means. The educational communicative situation, which is similar to the real process of communication, is an important condition for the formation of practical abilities and skills that will become the basis for the formation of the student's communicative competence [5].

Language as a system is an exclusively social phenomenon that is permanent, stable, has a

normative character and obliges everyone who uses it to obey its laws.

Speaking as the use of language in the process of communication is individual, dynamic, situationally determined. Speaking is a universal means of communication, and the meaning of the message shouldn't be lost when transmitting information using language signs [6].

Before considering the essence of the system of activities, let's turn to the definition of the very concept of "activity" in the methodology of teaching foreign languages. An activity is a specially organized, repeated performance of individual operations or actions in the educational process with the aim of mastering the foreign language [9].

Each exercise, regardless of its nature, has a three- or four-phase structure. The first phase is the task, the second phase is a sample of performance, the third phase is the performance of the task, the fourth phase is control (control by the teacher, mutual control or self-control of students), and only then reproduces it in full or in part.

In the modern methodology of teaching foreign languages to university students, the following classification of exercises for teaching speaking has been approved:

1) non-communicative,
2) conditionally communicative,
3) communicative.

In non-communicative (language) exercises, students perform actions with language material outside the speech situation, focusing only on the form.

Conditionally communicative (conditional-speech) exercises involve students' speaking actions in situational conditions. The main defining qualities of this type of activity are:

1) the presence of a speaking task (find out something, give someone advice, express admiration, etc.)

2) specific situation. If one of these two signs is missing, the activity cannot be classified as conditionally communicative [3].

Speaking activities belong to that type of exercises that serve to develop speaking skills based on phonetic, lexical and grammatical skills. These activities are situationally determined, communicatively motivated, aimed at the students' use of the studied material to express their own thoughts and understand others in connection with various stimuli and motives [2].

The performance of communicative tasks is carried out with the help of imaginary educational and speaking situations that require the solution of non-standard problems and bring educational communication closer to real conditions. The students have to perform a speaking activity in accordance with the communicative task. The content of each educational speaking situation requires a clearly defined object of communication and a specific situational task.

The new dictionary of methodological terms and concepts interprets communicative activities as "a type of creative exercises that ensure the formation of speaking skills and the highest level of practical language proficiency" [1].

Communicative tasks contribute to the formation of the students' readiness to communicate in oral form as a result of the complex use of language skills, speaking skills and acquired foreign language educational experience (general educational competencies), which ensures the formation of a dynamic speaking stereotype. Speaking communicative activities involve the development of the ability to logically interpret the received information, critically evaluate events, highlight the main thing, the ability to give a personal assessment, to argue and prove one's point of view, to comment something using elements of an evaluative nature [7].

Communicative tasks contribute to the development of students' creative abilities, independence and ensure the formation of the readiness for communication due to the complex use of language skills, speaking skills and educational experience.

We highlight the following types of communicative exercises that contribute to the development of students' speaking abilities:

1. Reproductive activities, which include:
– retelling;
– selective retelling;
– retelling-translation;
– dramatization;
– creative retelling.

2. Responsive activities that comprise:
– questions-answers;
– brainstorming ideas (replica exercises);
– free conversations.

Among the **productive activities**, we highlight the following ones:

3. Situational activities, which cover:
– problematic situations;
– imaginary situations;
– role-play situations, games.

4. Descriptive activities that unite into one group of activities:
– description of real objects,
– description of a static plot.

5. Debatable activities, which include:
– educational discussion (educational discussion);
– commentary;
– discussion (situational discussion) [10].

6. Story telling (composition exercises).

7. Press conference [3].

In *reproductive activities* the student reproduces the educational material he/she has received completely or with changes. All reproductive activities are actually receptive-reproductive, because students first perceive certain verbal information from the teacher, the announcer or from the textbook, and only then they reproduce it in whole or in part.

In *productive activities*, students independently generate expressions at different levels in oral form. If the production of oral expression is preceded by the perception and understanding of the text, then the exercise is considered receptive-productive [9].

To investigate the reproductive activities, we should highlight their main features. *Retelling* is the most typical type of reproductive communicative exercises. This type of activity contributes the preparation for students to freely express their thoughts

and feelings. When retelling the text, students use not only expressions that are given in the text, but also transfer other words, which were learned earlier, simplifying the presented language of the given material. And this helps to bring the narration closer to independent expression.

An abbreviated and selective retelling involves activities, directly related to the discussion of the story, analysis, discussion of the main problems of the work, but in a simplified version or according to a specific direction of the discussion [8].

Retelling-translation does not require a literal translation of the text but the transfer of the content of the language work, the content of the text as a whole. In addition, this type of retelling involves searching for foreign language options, appropriate words, inflections, necessary grammatical structures, etc., which forces students to think creatively and originally.

Dramatization. This is the freest, improvised retelling of a dialogic or monologue text by two or three students. Dramatization differs from retelling in the complexity of linguistic relationships between interlocutors, which requires not only a good knowledge of the text, but also the ability to clearly follow the dialogue partners' cues [6].

Question and answer exercises. This is a type of activity that is the most popular in the teaching method of speaking a foreign language. Question-answer is widely used while teaching students active speaking.

These exercises should be distinguished by the source of the answer, the type of question, the address of the answer. According to the source of the answer, we can distinguish questions based on the presented didactic material (text, picture) and questions, on which students must rely. The main types of questions are alternative and special. Questions can refer to the whole class, to pairs of students, or individually [7].

Replica exercises. As mentioned above, lines in a dialogue are not always related to each other, like a question and an answer. In a free conversation partners react quite productively to non-questioning statements, such as affirmations, encouragements, greetings, evaluation of judgments, etc. [4].

According to the main types of dialogic combinations, the following types of replica exercises should be distinguished according to the communicative structure:

– affirmation-question, that is a reply, with which one can answer, express doubt, clarification, etc.;

– affirmation-affirmation, when the corresponding response expresses confirmation, agreement, judgment, amendment, promise.

– affirmation-denial, when the corresponding reply expresses simplification, disagreement, protest, etc. [8].

Conditional conversation. This type of communicative activities is an educational analogue of free conversation, used for the development of speaking.

By conditional conversation, we mean exercises that stimulate the conditional communicative, unprepared speaking of students using a foreign language on the ground of some topic that will be developed later.

As it was mentioned above, all types of responsive activities are aimed at conducting a conversation. But it is necessary to develop certain skills and abilities to express a positive attitude to what is heard. Conditional conversation should be held in the second part of the lesson, because at the beginning there is observed a certain foreign language barriers of the students [7].

Situational activities. The essence of situational activities is in their free, specifically directed speaking reaction of students to a complex of imaginary or conditionally real circumstances that contain some difficulties, problems or conflicts, and require the involvement of students in solving them. Unlike responsive exercises, in which the answer is expressed in only one sentence, situational activities consist of a microtext (two to seven or more sentences) that briefly describe a model of a natural communicative situation.

As for the structure of situational activities, there are basically three main and three optional components. Permanent ones include: task, situation description, speaking cues. Optional elements that may or may not be present are as the following ones: keywords, questions and visual materials (plan, diagrams) [9].

Description activities. These communicative activities are based on material, perceived by sight, which has a certain meaning and which will be described. These exercises may vary depending on the available characteristics of the visual materials.

Thus, the method of visualization allows to develop exercises based on: a) image (drawing, illustration); b) use of different technical equipment; c) use of television and video equipment [7].

Description activities are classified as communicative because visual material, which has an independent meaning, provides a reason and basis for composition, creativity, students' expression of their thoughts, feelings that arose as a result of perception.

Hence, the methodologically significant classification of description activities are based on what students must translate using different language forms. From this point of view, the following activities are distinguished: description of the simplest images; description of fictional plots; description of static plots; description of real stories [3].

Description of the simplest images. Pupils are provided with drawings, in which they see people, animals, various objects in a certain relationship.

Description of fictional plots is a type of the report based on a series of consecutive drawings. When preparing students for this type of work, the teacher should teach them to "read" images, to see the stage of plot development and the whole plot in general [3].

Description of real stories. The object of the description can be everyday real objects. Students should be taught to describe objects according to the scheme: what the object is used for, its appearance, the material, from which it is made, etc. [5].

Game in class. During the study of foreign languages, much attention is paid to the game forms of educational activity. Playing in a class is a means of teaching, developing and educating students. Games open the field for thinking, cleverness, imagination,

perseverance, good feelings, and also form students' desire for initiative, solving problems with the help of the English language.

Conditionally communicative activities are focused on performing various operations using speaking material. The focus here is not on the communicative functions of utterances, but on their phonetic, lexical or grammatical correctness. While communicative activities, used at the lessons, are exercises, for which speaking is a means of implementation of the knowledge in the free conversation [4].

Here is an example of one of the games. *The Game "Would you like to...?"* aims to train students to use general questions in their speech with the verb construction "Would like". There can be some cards with different phrases about different types of activities or different pictures, laid out on the teacher's table. Students are asked to guess a certain type of activity, written on the card. Students from the class ask questions to the presenter: "Would you like to travel to Egypt?", "Would you like to buy sth new?", "Would you like to study sth new?" until someone guesses what is written on the card.

Communicative games should be distinguished from linguistic games, since the main purpose of communicative games is not to solve linguistic tasks, but to organize unprepared communication [6].

Communicative games are played in pairs or in small groups with all group members usually having some information.

Guessing games: The principle of the game is that players who have information deliberately withhold it, while other players try to guess it.

Search games: Each participant in the game usually has one piece of information that is needed to fill out a questionnaire or solve a problem. The main task is to collect all available information. Thus, each player is both an informant and a gatherer of information.

Matching games: These are games that involve participants in matching similar pairs, cards or pictures and can be played as a whole class, with each player having to go around the class until they find a partner with the same card or picture. Matching games are based on the mosaic principle, where each player in the group has a list of opinions, preferences or suggestions. Only one of the written ones is shared by everyone in the group. While having a discussion, the group determines what is best in some given situation [8, 9].

Games for sharing or collecting information. Players have certain items or cards that they willingly collect to complete their task. This can be played as a whole class, where players roam freely in the class, while exchanging items or cards, to perform this task in a group.

All of these activities may include elements of problem solving, elements of role-playing or imaginative play. Communicative games involve working in pairs, large and small groups, and as a whole class, while participants must be able to freely move around the room.

The role of the teacher in the game: to monitor, to listen, to provide students with the necessary information, (i.e. to provide language assistance), to notice mistakes, but not to interrupt or to correct them, rather to make marks on the paper [7]. Communicative game contributes to the intensification of language practice, creates contact, on the basis of which the language is learned more profoundly and thoroughly.

The limitations of the study that has influenced the given research are connected to methodology and the research procedure that we may need to explain and check the findings in the way of experiment with different groups of students while conducting some English courses.

The prospects for further research in the creation of creative communicative activities for the development of speaking skills of students studying English at universities are tend to be in the focus of further investigations.

6. Conclusions

1. The investigation has showed the principle scheme of the system of activities, which are designed for mastering a foreign language. First of all, the relationship between training and language practice should be dynamic and creative. The division of exercises into language and speaking communicative exercises is conditional and represents value only in the methodological plan. The same activities can be both language and communicative, depending on the stage of teaching. But to master any activity, including speaking, basic knowledge is necessary to be used and practised.

2. The results of our analysis revealed the need for communicative activities, aimed to develop speaking skills of the students while teaching them a foreign language. The system of activities for mastering a foreign language should always be aimed at practical and situational teaching of a foreign language. Therefore, the main purpose of speaking activities is to ensure training of phonetic, lexical and grammar material in both receptive and reproductive terms for further use of these units in free communication.

3. It was dinstinguished three types of activities. In non-communicative (language) exercises, students perform actions with language material outside the speech situation, focusing only on the form. Conditionally communicative (conditional-speech) exercises involve students' speaking actions in situational conditions. While the performance of communicative tasks is carried out with the help of imaginary educational and speaking situations that require the solution of non-standard problems and bring educational communication closer to real conditions.

4. It is necessary to develop communicative activities based on a real-life material or a model text, which are relevant for certain students' age, they should be interesting, close and understandable for students, have educational and socio-cultural potential. Communicative activities should be widely used in practice, which certainly has a positive effect on the development of reproductive and productive speaking activity of students, since these exercises bring this teaching closer

to the needs of life, allow the teacher to activate the educational process, and students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills through practical activities.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in relation to this research, whether financial, personal, authorship or otherwise, that could affect the research and its results, presented in this article.

Data availability

Manuscript has no associated data.

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